

## Interview Transcript

Interview Date: 09/19/2017

Interviewee: Sister Anita Joseph Aragon

Interviewer: Shannon Green, Director, CSJ Institute, Mount Saint Mary's University; Sean Gary, Kelby Thwaits, Instructor, Film and Television, Mount Saint Mary's University; Mary Trunk, Instructor, Film and Television, Mount Saint Mary's University; Laura Townsend, Production Coordinator, CSJ Institute. Location: Carondelet Center, Los Angeles, California.

Transcription Date: 09/28/2017

Transcribed By: Nancy Steinmann

[00:00:00.00] [Director's comments]

[00:00:22.20] INTERVIEWER: Today is Tuesday, September 19, 2017. We are at Carondelet Center in Los Angeles, California, and present is Shannon Green, Sean Gary, Mary Trunk, and Laura Townsend. And our first interview is with Sister Anita Joseph Aragon.

[00:00:47.05] INTERVIEWER: Sister, could we get started by just asking you to say your full name and your age?

[00:00:54.13] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: I am Sister Anita Joseph Aragon. And my age--I am ninety years old, so if I forget things you'll know why. [laughs]. Have a good reason. My excuse.

[00:01:08.28] INTERVIEWER: What is your given name?

[00:01:10.20] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: My given name was Dylia-- [spells out] "D Y L I A"--Aragon.

[00:01:16.17] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: And would you tell us where you were born and where you grew up and a little bit about your family?

[00:01:23.00] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: I was born in Belen, New Mexico. Belen is thirty miles south of Albuquerque. My mother was Anna Maria Baca. My dad was Ignacio Aragon y Barreras. You know the Spanish tend to add their mother's maiden name to their--. My dad did it and I presume that's why others do it because they want to be distinguished from other relatives with the same name. He had a cousin with the same name, and they both worked for the railroad, and that was a problem so he added "Y Barreras". "Barreras"--well, first of all I'll tell you that we believe we are descendants of the early settlers in New Mexico. We have no history of any place else from our parents, grandparents, and so forth. Our cousins did find a grandparent--great-grandparent who was born in the northern part of Spain in--what is that--can't think of the--they're just below France--that nationality--they're always fighting Spain--what's the name--

[00:02:31.27] INTERVIEWER: --the Basque region--

[00:02:32.24] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: --the Basque region of Spain--that's--the Barreras came from that area. So that's all that we know about as background. I was born in Belen, New Mexico. I was the youngest of eight children. My parents had eight--okay--two of my sisters died very young. I didn't know them. So they really raised six of us. If you want to hear about my mother, she wanted to go to school, but they did not accept women at the time in schools in New Mexico. When she was nine they started accepting women, and she and her cousin decided that, "We're going to do it. We're old but we're going to go through school." She did--she finished what they called "the normal school" in those days. From there she went on--they go on to professional schools--and she did her teacher training through correspondence and became a teacher. She had twelve classrooms--twelve grades--pardon me, eight grades in one classroom, like "Little House on the Prairie". She said she loved it--it was--she enjoyed it. She didn't get to do it too long because she married--soon after--married my dad. My dad's education was less--he went--he says he went through the third grade off and on when they didn't need him in the farm. And he was--but he read the newspaper, he listened to the radio and TV later on, and kept up with politics and what was going on. He was a farmer but also worked for the railroad--Santa Fe Railroad. So we were raised in a ranch in Belen, two and a half miles from town. It was a big ranch which reached--our properties I believe were granted to us through the

land grants that were given in the old, old days, and they kind of patched the properties together. So we had quite a large ranch which reached all the way to the Rio Grande [river]. And it was a lovely place with a--.

[00:04:46.12] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: We went to school at St. Mary's--my sister Anita, two years older than myself, and I--went to St. Mary's School. She started--well, my mother had two generations of children. There were three older ones that--two had graduated from high school, one was married by that time I was ready to go--I was four years old that is. And my sister started at age six, first grade. My mother didn't want me to lag behind so she got permission for me to go to school at age four to kindergarten. So she pushed me in. And we went through school together. St. Mary's--we went to school at eight o'clock in the morning for--we went to mass. We had mass--we gathered in church. So we were--we received our first communion. Actually I was baptized and confirmed when I was a baby. In those days the bishop would come just periodically and he would take everyone--babies or educated or not educated--he confirmed us. We were baptized when we were about one day old--but we were confirmed very early on. We didn't have to study like the do nowadays. But we--our family was very religious--parents, and very strict with us. We followed all the rules and all the school regulations and so forth. In school--we started first communion when we were young and we learned to follow the Mass. When I was in sixth grade, for the first time I think everywhere the Church was allowing participation in the liturgy to the extent that you had missals. The missals were in Latin though. Mass was in Latin. So we had classes on pronunciation and answering in Latin. We didn't say it out loud, but we followed it, and we had the English along with it, so we knew what we were--hoped we knew what we were saying. School was wasn't all religion. We had some fun times. They were the days of Shirley Temple [Shirley Temple Black (1928-2014), American child actress]. Our first movie that our sisters--older sisters--took us to was a Shirley Temple movie. And we were taught Shirley Temple songs and dances and we participated in Christmas programs. We were taught Spanish dances--dressed as Spanish señoritas, and the boys in their Spanish dress. So in the middle of the sixth grade we moved to Barstow, California. I don't know if you are ready for me to go to that.

[00:07:31.29] INTERVIEWER: Can I just as you one--

[00:07:33.22] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: Yeah, sure.

[00:07:34.27] INTERVIEWER: Did you grow up in a Spanish-speaking household?

[00:07:36.13] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: We spoke both English and Spanish. My mother spoke it quite well because she taught it in English--and my dad--broken English. But we spoke both. We grew up speaking both, which I was grateful for. My younger nieces and nephews--my sisters' kids--did not--they grew up with English. And they were very sorry about it later on. They wished they had learned Spanish like we did. We moved to Barstow. My dad worked for the railroad. We sold our ranch.

[00:08:14.05] INTERVIEWER: How old were you when you moved to Barstow?

[00:08:16.00] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: Eleven years old. It was my birthday the day I started school. In Barstow we met Mexican people, believe it or not. You'd think we were Mexicans from New Mexico, but we were not, we were Spanish people. We spoke a little different Spanish from the--Mexico to us was like a foreign country. And the people in Barstow were like first generation Mexicans in Barstow, or second generation, and they were dark. Our people were light. Most of them were light--there were some different shades of course. It was a different situation. School was public school. We had no Catholic school. We had--my parents--my mother--definitely--we had to follow all the church regulations. We went to Mass. We followed all the--we had to follow--we were in the choir, we sang in the choir. We went to--in summers the catechists would come and teach us religion--that was for a couple of weeks--but that was the extent of our education--Christian education. Barstow Elementary School and High School were both a lot of fun. They--I can remember a couple of things I can tell you about that were fun, but--once a year they would--it was like seventh grade--they turned the yard into a sports area where we had practicing for days. We got shortened schedules in school--that was nice. And we practiced for all these running and high jumps and broad jumps and whatever they--. And then came the competition with all the desert schools--Lancaster, Twentynine Palms--in the high school. They've turned that into a big track. I won two ribbons. I was very proud of those ribbons. We also had Calico Days up in the hills. And we got to go practice a day before--got out of school--singing all the way in a truck--back of a truck--just all loaded there. It wasn't like days when

you had to have seat belts and all that. At night--the next day, for the real program--we had seventh graders--us seventh graders were Indian girls perched upon a hill. The Indians yelled from the hills, or yelped, whatever it was. And eighth graders were gathered around in covered wagons down below. And we came after--we all came marching down to drums and we circled around, and I don't really remember it all. But I know that we sat on the hillside and sang California songs. It was a California celebration of some sort. It was very dark--pitch dark--and the chorale director directed us with her flashlight. That was that. One other interesting thing there if you still have time for Barstow Elementary--we had our--we belonged to the county schools--San Bernardino County. And the San Bernardino County chorale director came to the school and said we were all--the chorale group was to learn Stephen Foster songs--nine of them. And we practiced and practiced. Well we had to be able to sing--keep--you know--just keep in tune. And on the day that we came, we gathered together--all the San Bernardino Schools--went to--we went in a big bus from Barstow to San Bernardino--four hour drive--no freeways in those days. We gathered together in Long Beach. You weren't born yet, I'm sure, but Long Beach had what they called--well they had the Pan Pacific Auditorium--great big auditorium. We gathered there to--all the schools--San Bernardino schools--county schools--and practiced our songs. And then they dismissed us for the noon--go get food. Long Beach, in those days, had a "Pike"--what they call a "Pike". And the Pike--they had carnival things--all rides--right at the beach. We were right at the beach area. And they had--well, they had little stands where you could buy hamburgers, hot dogs, whatever--so we had our lunch there. And we had to report back at one for this ceremony. And we did and we sang the whole--all these Stephen Foster songs. And I think there was some dancing--it's supposed to have been on the radio--no TV then in those days. They couldn't see the dancing of course but they--I guess heard the singing on the radio. I don't know about it. I presume. We boarded our busses early and landed home at nine o'clock at night, our parents waiting for us. Okay.

[00:13:16.25] INTERVIEWER: Great! So when you were in public school then, in elementary and high school, were you thinking about religious life at that time?

[00:13:27.06] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: Not yet.

[00:13:28.26] INTERVIEWER: So then let's talk a little bit about how you decided to come to Mount St. Mary's, and were your parents supportive of you getting a college education?

[00:13:39.00] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: Okay. I went to Barstow High School. I could tell you some interesting things there but I'll skip that. And then I went to San Luis Rey. We went two years to high school. It was--World War II was on--a lot of soldiers in town, and dancing with the soldiers. One of my girlfriends said--she was going to San Luis Rey Academy--two year academy--girls school, and boarding school, so we said, "Oh we'd like to go." And we asked our parents. They were delighted--get us away from what was happening in Barstow. So I went to--okay, we went to San Luis Rey for two years--boarding school--was a very small school. It was next to a mission school--to Mission San Luis Rey. Of course there were the--[laughs]--Camp Pendleton was nearby, and the Marines came to Mass at the mission sometimes. They invited us to receptions sometimes. My sister and I got to go to a--well, they asked for a couple of girls to go to--they had this big submarine in Oceanside they wanted to show the public, and they asked for a couple of girls to come down and serve tea to the public coming in. And so we--my sister and I got to go down, and we served tea to this Marine--big old car came to pick us up and brought us home. Anyhow, that was an interesting thing. And at San Luis Rey we had our first retreat. Bishop Buddy [Bishop Charles Francis Buddy (1887-1966)] from San Diego came and gave us a three day retreat--and then he invited us to his house before graduation--had Mass for us and we --had a big brunch for us, and then he sent us off to a movie. Then we came back and they served us cake and ice cream, then we went home. And we graduated from San Luis Rey Academy--I mean San Luis Rey Mission--the graduation took place there. It was very nice. I missed it very much. I loved San Luis Rey. Anyhow, then we went to the Mount--I went to the Mount--my sister didn't--she got married. [laughs].

[00:15:45.26] INTERVIEWER: Was getting a college education always important to you--something you always wanted?

[00:15:52.11] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: Not really. I had no intentions of going to college. My girlfriend was going to go to college, and she said, "Let's go to college." And I had been working, and she said, "It might be good to go take some courses." So I had saved some money, and my parents helped me,

and so I went and enrolled at the Mount. They told me I could not take "just some courses"--I was too young--I had to take a full freshman course. I thought, well, I won't stay here that long. So I started freshman year. My freshman year--want me to tell you about my freshman year at the Mount? When I went there the--what is it called--the Coe Memorial--Willard Coe Memorial Library was built that year--finished that year [1947]--and prior to that the library had been in the--Brady Hall back where the--I think the mail room is now, or even before that--I don't know--I wasn't sure. For moving the books to the library they asked the novices from St. Mary's Academy to come and help. The novices--there were so many of them--they lined up from Brady all the way to the library, passing the books from one to the other until they passed them all up. That was a memory that I had of that. The Mount now has a sports arena. In those days we were required to have physical ed four semesters. That was done away with later on. But we had all kinds of sports: tennis--we had a tennis teacher, basketball--I don't recall volleyball. We had a course in--one course--one semester we had archery and even fencing, so that was interesting. We used to hike a lot in the hills back and forth--even hiked--a girlfriend and I went all the way to Westwood once, hiking--walking. We took a taxi back. But anyhow--

[00:18:04.27] INTERVIEWER: It sounds like you started to like it?

[00:18:06.13] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: I started to like it. After my sophomore year I was thinking about entering and I thought--the community--the convent. Then I thought, no--I changed my mind. I went on--and my parents helped me--to go through junior and senior year. Let's see what else about--oh and--in our junior year we had the snowfall. I have a picture of that. We had enough snowball--enough snow that we could--to play--build snowmen and so forth. We were--while at the Mount, we were a small school and we were--we participated in clubs. And we were even officers of some of the clubs--we had a lot of experience--I mean, we got that kind of experience of leadership which we would not have had in a big school--I wouldn't have had--I was too bashful, too shy. But I kind of came out of it in those days. We got to know the Sisters. There were oh some thirty forty Sisters there. They taught us, they--there were some lay teachers--I was a Business and Economics major and a Spanish minor. And I had lay teachers for Business. While I was taking a Business course we went on a trip to UCLA to see their first computer there. And the first computer--was a little room with all these--shuffling all these cards around. It was just a little machine shuffling cards around. That was the first computer I ever saw. But anyhow, we graduated--I graduated from the Mount knowing that I was going to enter and I told my parents I was going to enter. Graduation was in the Bowl--[unintelligible] you've heard about the Bowl at the Mount. It was where the parking structure is now. When they built the buildings--the original buildings--all the dirt from those buildings was put in a--that area and it sank eventually with the rains and so forth, and became a bowl. They planted plants and also they put in bleachers and put a place where--what do you call that--place where the graduates would sit and a place where officials would sit. It was a lovely site for our graduations. Later on the graduations took place in the Circle when I was Registrar later on. Okay, my mother did not want me to enter--she tried to talk me out of it. My dad--by this time they had moved to New Mexico, because my senior year they--my dad retired and they moved back to Belen and they had their house there. My dad was--"If that's what she wants"--he was for--he was okay. Anyhow.

[00:20:56.27] INTERVIEWER: Would you tell us about some of the Sisters you remember as a student-- [unintelligible] they were your instructors?

[00:21:02.22] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: Oh yes. Sister Alice Marie [Sister Alice Marie Cheap (1906-1984)]--I later worked with her when I was Registrar. She was Academic Dean then. Prior to that she taught us. There was Sister Aline Marie [Sister Aline Marie Gerber (1917-2009)], who was Sister Mechtilde's [birth] sister. She taught--before she entered she taught me Spanish. I had--Sister St. Francis [Sister St. Francis Sheerin (-1961)] taught me--I was once of her Economics classes. Hortensia [Sister Mary Hortensia Lynch (-1969)]--I would know them all--Agnes Marie [Sister Agnes Marie O'Loughlin (1903-2006)]--Agnes Marie was the President at the time. She--we had a little conflict among the Sisters about whether they should let the girls have a smoking room. The--they used to go I think out in the hills to smoke and some of the Sisters saying, "That's dangerous" on the hillsides. "Why don't we just have a room for--let them smoke, they're going to smoke anyhow." One Sister, Hortensia, was very opposed to it. She--you could hear her--"They should not be allowed to smoke! Why encourage them--". And you know on and on. Anyhow. Sister Agnes Marie, the President, got the seniors and said, "What do you think about our having a smoking room?"--and of course, "Sure. Why not?". I don't think that lasted too long, because when I came back as Registrar they

were smoking around--those that did. But it's dangerous around those hillsides. Anyhow.

[00:22:25.20] INTERVIEWER: I--being with the Sisters for four years, and we went to Mass--I went to Mass every day. We didn't have to. We had to go to--we had retreats. For retreats the girls had to wear caps and gowns--for the talks in the Chapel we had to wear caps and gowns. We were very formal. Some had pajamas on underneath I think because they were early in the morning. [laughs]. But we wore them. Okay, I entered in St. Mary's. I'd never been to St. Mary's Academy before I entered. My roommate had. I had a roommate that we're still friends today--we still visit. Anyhow I entered. Novitiate was very easy for me. I had been in boarding schools and away from home. It was hard on some of the others. Five entered with me--two left--all of them left but two--well, one was not allowed to continue, but anyhow. It was hard--I mean for some it was really hard. We were a very large group.

[00:23:27.20] INTERVIEWER: Were there Sisters that particularly influenced you in those--when you were discerning and then when you entered?

[00:23:36.15] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: Yeah. I liked some better than others--that I knew better--like Sister St. Francis. You know--[unintelligible] I just wanted to be one of them, you know. After being with them, that's what I wanted. I can't say that I was holy enough to be thinking about "I want to serve God". I think that came later in our instructions and our novitiate days of study and meditation, prayer, retreats--

[00:24:01.11] INTERVIEWER: What was it about them that you wanted to be part of them?

[00:24:04.12] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: I enjoyed being with them. They were friendly, they were--they had a good time together--with us too. And it was just what I wanted--you know, wanted to follow--[unintelligible] go right along. That's about as much as I can say about it. I don't know what else--

[00:24:20.02] INTERVIEWER: I see. So I'm sorry--you were talking about when you were in novitiate and into prayer and meditation--

[00:24:26.17] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: Yeah, prayer and meditation, retreats. We had silence--you know--most of the--it wasn't silence--we had strict silence especially at night time. Once in a while we'd have a recreation day. Once in a while for some special occasion the Superior would say--we were a bit group in the dining room and she'd declare recreation for us all so we'd enjoy that. We wore habits of course. We--well, we got our reception on--my reception was six months after entering. I entered 1950, reception was 1951. We were a smaller group. We had entered fifty of us--we were in the forties somewhere--I don't remember exactly how many--and then went through the novitiate. I taught a class of Spanish to my group. And I had a course in Spanish myself. There were classes during our novitiate--secular classes--you know they helped them towards the degree. I already had my degree so I taught one class and I studied another for Spanish major.

[00:25:41.10] INTERVIEWER: Did you find in your group that there were differences because you had already gone to college and probably some of your group was younger?

[00:25:50.24] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: There were. There were some right at--most of them I think were right out of high school. We had some that were older than myself even if you can believe that. I was twenty-three and some were almost thirty--that had their degrees. One of them had gone to UCLA, another one--I don't know where she went--but--and one--there were about four that had graduated--five that had graduated from college already. But you know we all had the same classes, the same instructions and we got along very well with no problem. I think we kind of felt sorry for the younger ones that had a harder time, perhaps. We had people that were--had a lot--played jokes on each other and things like that in the novitiate. If you know Sister Kathleen Mary [McCarthy]--she--have you had her? Well, she was in our reception and she was always in trouble. She broke her glasses ten times when she was there. I had to keep sending them home to her mother to get them fixed. I mean, it wasn't all seriousness. It was a lot of fun. I enjoyed it. Had Teresa Ann [??] if you've met her yet. You haven't met her? She's--[shakes head and laughs]--okay. I don't know if you want to meet her, but anyhow--[laughs]. She's in Hawaii and she's a real character. So there were fun times in the novitiate. I don't know if you want to skip on from there. Made our vows in 1950--what--three--1953.

[00:27:20.18] INTERVIEWER: And how did you feel that day when you took your vows?

[00:27:25.17] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: Well I was kind of sorry. I liked the novitiate [laughs]. So I didn't--it was kind of a little--scared of going to my first mission. And I--my first mission I was--I was not happy there--my first day. But--St. Eugene's--I was missioned the day after. I had to go right after my first vows. And it was a small--compared to the novitiate--compared to the big groups I'd been with--it was a small group and I was missioned in March, and I had to do--I had to take over the sixth grade because the teacher--sixth grade was going to take over the eighth grade, because the principal was not feeling well. So but she helped me a lot with the--I enjoyed the year. I--little by little--the summer times--that next summer I went to Loyola University for some more courses in Business. And then I went--then we had--then I was to teach--if you can believe it--second and third grade. After Loyola we had a workshop for teachers teaching the primary grades, so that helped. And I had a second and a third grade. And [laughs] I tried and I was also given the job or the work--the mission to prepare the first communion children--the second graders--my class, the lay teacher's class, and the public school children. So here I was preparing children for first communion. And we went through it--made it. My wish was that I could have a--next year I could just have all second graders or all third graders so I could really have a grasp on what I was doing. And I--next year I was put in sixth and seventh grade combination, because I was supposed to be teaching high school, and I had had all my courses for high school but I had not my credential. So--that would help me. So that summer after second/third grade teaching I went to--I was told to go to UCLA. I took Business courses there. I enjoyed that summer. Then we had a workshop at St. Mary's from a Sister who taught the upper grades. And then I taught sixth and seventh grade. That was a little easier--a little less demanding than--before you teach the lower grades you are acting all the time. You can't stop. It is tiresome. Sixth and seventh you can at least sit down a little while and talk to them. They were good. I--again I was wishing I could continue on in grade school--I liked it. I wanted to teach all of the grades. I felt I could really learn something. In grade school you learn--you really learn your geography, your history. I find that Sisters that have taught in the grades all their life are very smart. I mean, they really know their background. You know you talk about history, you talk about geography--they've had that all their lives, and then they follow it. The people who go into--I think--maybe I'm rash judging--but the people who go into high school and especially college--they're geared to a certain level--a certain--well I don't want to say industry--just study--

[00:30:56.17] INTERVIEWER: --[topic??] or--

[00:30:58.03] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: --yeah. And they--I don't think they're as rounded [laughs] as the--the ones who--some of course went from elementary to high school to college teaching, so they had all the background. In community we've had a lot of experiences that as a lay person you just don't have. I mean, we had the opportunities--the community had the schools--the elementary to high schools--they staffed all these--Bishop would just say, "We need them here"--pastor would need them here or there. And we had the vocations at the time. And so if somebody needed to--that's all--they just sent them to school to learn. Some went to college, went to universities, to get their doctorates or whatever. Okay I went to teach--I taught--after sixth and seventh grade that summer I was asked to go to school to go to USC--take some courses there--Business courses. So there I went.

[00:32:03.06] INTERVIEWER: Could I ask you about Business and Economics? It seems like that's been a strong theme for your studies and ministry.

[00:32:11.09] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: It has.

[00:32:11.24] INTERVIEWER: Did you enjoy that? Did you feel like you fell into it?

[00:32:14.26] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: I went into it because in high school--well, I'll go farther back. My mother used to say to my sister and me, "Take typing and shorthand and you'll always have a job." That was her--she wanted us to graduate but she kept saying that to us over and over. So we went to--we were obedient girls--we went to high school, we took Business courses. I was not really prepared for college. When I decided to go to college and when I decided to stay in college I had to make up some things. There's some things I'd had already but--and some things I could combine, but--I studied had to get through what--I had to have high school geometry--I had to have it as a special course with some others that

hadn't had it. Anyhow, so here I was at USC, and Sister Marie Bernadette [Walsh] and I were there at--we were at Stimson House. You know where Stimson House is. It was called Infant of Prague at the time. It was given to us by--I think it went to the archdiocese first--by the people that owned that whole Doheny--what were the name--you know their name?

[00:33:23.16] INTERVIEWER: The--well the Doheny's had the--

[00:33:26.05] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: Yeah, Doheny had the property, gave it to the woman, the secretary that married Mr. Doheny--[laughs]--then inherited it--gave the whole property to the archdiocese. The archdiocese gave it to the school--to the Mount--to carry on education, and gave us what--it used to be called Infant of Prague, which is now Stimson, which we are now--have evacuated--and it's now going to be--I think it's going to be to the Mount if things happen--if things work out--go back to the Mount. Okay, Marie Bernadette and I were going to USC with Regina Clare [Sister Regina Clare Salazar]--I think you've met her. We walked--sometimes one of the boys would give us a ride [laughs] to the USC campus. We took--this was Economic--Business courses. In the middle of this Marie Bernadette and I were called by the provincialate to come and see them. So we went to see the provincial in their office--she and the assistant. They sat us down--and we didn't know what was coming--they said, "Daniel Freeman Hospital has just been finished. We need someone to run the Business Office, but we can't decide who to send." It was between me and Marie Bernadette. Marie Bernadette had been in banking for about eight years before she entered. I had finished my college and all these education--Business courses. They couldn't decide. So we--being so young and--you know, we didn't decide in those days--we just remained silent while we listened to them and they were going back and forth on this. Finally I spoke up and I said, "What if I go to Daniel Freeman and take--do the work there and let Marie Bernadette start college? If I don't work out, we can just change it." And they said, "Okay, we'll do that." They were like--"Okay." [laughs]. They served us--at that point they served us pie and coffee. [laughs]. They were so happy--[laughs].

[00:35:41.02] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: I no sooner finished school--the summer school--then I was grabbed by Mother Killian [Rev. Mother Mary Killian Corbett (-1965)] who was Superior at Daniel Freeman. "Dear, could you come on Monday?" The provincial had told me, "Stay away from Mother Killian, she'll grab you right away." She wanted me to have a little time off. But anyhow, I went to Daniel Freeman. I was--managed the Business Office. I was the only Finance person there. We had a hundred bed hospital--a hundred percent occupancy, those days. We were so busy. There was--but we--were a lot of Sisters in Administration, and all the staffing. We went to Mass early--we prayed together early in the morning, went to Mass--we recreated together evenings--so we carried on our--[laughs]--religious-- And we had a retreat every year. But we kept--you know a hospital is open day and night, and all year long, and your hardest part is your vacation times and your holiday times, because the staff has to take time off, and we just kept going. It was hard work, but eventually we built a new wing and it was a little easier. There were some fun times. Like we had--the Lakers came to town, and they were hospitalized--they were injured. We had sports medicine there--the Lakers were injured there. The Dodgers came to town and their injured--I had a hard time collecting their insurance, but I got through eventually. It was--you know, kind of a little publicity there with the Lakers and the Dodgers. We got into trouble--the Sisters got into trouble--you want to hear about that?

[00:37:38.29] KELBY THWAITS: You bet we want to hear about that. [All laugh].

[00:37:44.04] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: Well, it's not maybe what you think, but it--one time we went on a vacation. It was two nurses and Josefa Therese [Sister Josefa Therese Lee]--you haven't met her--you have to meet her sometime. She does--yes--the hair. Anyhow, she--four of us went. This lady loaned us their place in Balboa--Balboa Beach. And we went there for a week, I think. And one day we were--Josefa Therese was taking a nap, and I--to the other two Sisters said--the nurses said they wanted to go to the--what do you call--where you go fishing you know? The pier--Balboa Pier. And I said, "I want to wait for Josefa. We'll join you when she wakes up." So they went--they got into trouble. When they got to the Pier, this lady--I guess it must have been the lady that owned the house--said, "Why don't you fish? You know, come on and fish." So they threw their--you know they have their veil [gestures to face] they threw back, and they took off their--they used to have little sleeves underneath the bigger--took them off and rolled up their sleeves so they were--and had legs hanging down off the Pier, and they got their fishing--they had the lady furnished them with big straw hats. So they were--and we hadn't come yet. Down the--around the lake

came this boat--this man with a camera came--took their pictures. They came home and when they told us--we eventually joined them--they said, "Sister"--they were scared to death. "It's going to be in the paper!" And they were scared to death. We went and looked at the newspaper stands the next day and the next day and they weren't--they weren't--they were, "Oh, maybe it's just somebody else"--forgot about it. That September the--it was Examiner in those days--before the LA Times--they put out a summer issue of summer vacation doings. On the front page--the front cover--the first half--were these two Sisters' pictures with their fishing and hair and their--we never in public, you know, do that sort of thing. Sister Eleanor [Francis Powers?] who was one of them was in surgery--she was in charge of Surgery. She called me in the Business Office. She said, "Sister, we're in the paper! We're in the Examiner in the front page! Come and see it!" So as I started out of the office, Mother Killian our Superior was sitting in the office next to me--the office. She said, "Sister! Sister, come here!" So I had to go--"Sit down. Sit down." She turned the page--she had a newspaper--she said, "You know these Sisters?" I said, "I think I do." [laughs]. Eventually she let me go. She didn't remark too much. She was a very wise woman. Anyhow I went up to Surgery and I looked at these pictures. I don't know what they said to those Sisters or what happened with them or the--I mean, they continued on, they were needed in the Surgery and nursing. But that September the archdiocese--the archdiocesan educational supervisor--used to gather all the Sisters in teaching and the archdiocese together in some place and--to talk to them. Well, this September, he gave them a talk about Sisters appearing in public, and it was due to these two Sisters. And they were not to be going to Disneyland--that was open at that time. They were not to be appearing in public--public places, and all these things, you know. They got a real sermon. We in the hospital of course didn't even go to that but we knew what had happened. They told us of course. Anyhow that's what got us into trouble--that was the trouble. Time passed and that disappeared of course. Sisters go all over the place. Okay. Daniel Freeman--I don't know if there is anything else I can remember about Daniel Freeman--.

[00:41:42.05] INTERVIEWER: Some people talk about the spirit of working at Daniel Freeman--as being a special place.

[00:41:46.19] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: It was a special place because of--you know we--there were so many Sisters and people--I mean they liked it--the doctors liked it. Of course sometimes--poor Sister Julia Mary [Farley?]-you haven't met her, but she ran--she started after her hospital work--I guess you heard she started a home for women under the diocese. But anyhow she was in admissions and the doctors would demand to have their patients--you know, we're the good doctors--we're your staff doctors--and the nurses--they wouldn't have rooms, so the nurses would--and she would put them in halls--hallways with curtains around them. And the nurses would get mad at her for that because that was extra work for them. So she was kind of in the middle of the doctors and nurses. But eventually they built another wing and that helped a lot. And it helped us because we got--we had more office space. They gave us the office across the--and I didn't have to do the credit management and all that stuff. It was hard. You know, I was doing all this--everything. Now I could get help and payroll and all got them over on that side. We--for a while we didn't have the convent. Some of us lived in the stockroom, and it was--with curtains around us--like nine of us and the curtains around us and the--[laughs]--we had a--we took a shower in the bathroom over in the corner. The shower had a curtain around it and to get to the other shower you had to--a sister was standing in this and she'd have to move into the shower so we could pass and go to the other one. Things like that. I think originally at the very beginning they were housed in the morgue. [laughs]. Anyhow, that's another story. I was--I didn't come then. Our beds--and we had the stock clerk--it was a kind of an innocent guy--he was a good guy--he--you know, he took care of his stockroom. But he--one time we had a flood--a pipe broke into the stockroom and he said, "Oh, your convent is flooded." We laughed--our convent, you know. But eventually, Grace Howland [(1870-1956), born Grace Elizabeth Freeman, daughter of Daniel Freeman] who was next door--you've heard about this from Regina Clare [Sister Regina Clare Salazar] probably and those people at Daniel Freeman, who was still living that first year in Howland House--she moved away or whatever--and we got the house. I never moved over--I didn't want to bother moving over. Some of us stayed in the--down in the stockroom. I was there six years. And then Marie Bernadette [Sister Marie Bernadette Walsh] in the meantime had finished her--she went to UCLA, got her degree there, and then she had internship--at different--I don't know if you can get her to come. But she had internship--[laughs]--she's funny. I'll tell you a funny story at the end if you want me to. She--anyhow, she had gone to internship to our hospital--we had five hospitals at the time, and she was--they were sending her to Daniel Freeman.

[00:44:36.25] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: And somebody spoke up for me going as the Registrar--they



had always wanted me as a Registrar--for some reason. And so to the Mount I went. I was delighted. It was so much easier than that hospital work. [laughs]. I worked with faculty, students and the Academic Dean who had taught me in school, Alice Marie [Sister Alice Marie Cheap (1906-1984)] was Academic Dean. Sister Rebecca [Sister Mary Rebecca Doan (1910-1999)] was--you've heard about her I'm sure--she started the Nursing program--she was the President--very funny President. She was a nurse, but strict too. We were still in the habit, and we were--telling our prayers, our retreats, our Mass together--our prayer life was still--we carried it on. We had--Sister Alice Marie and I put out the catalogs--the publications--all the school schedules. We did--I did the grade sheets without computers, registered the students. Two months after I moved to the Mount we had the Bel Air Fire [1961]. And we lost our convent, everything in it--we lost Art building and that night of the fire we stayed at Loyola University. The boys moved out of their dorm and we spent the night there. We watched in the dining room--we watched the TV--they had a big TV. In the windows--we could see the fire from the windows. And the TV--our teacher--one of the teachers--came on the news and said, "Sister Rebecca wants everybody to come back to--". We've lost two buildings, they told us--the fire had moved on, and we had lost two buildings, but "Sister Rebecca wants everybody to come back to school tomorrow to clean up." So we were delighted that we were going back, and that there was a school to go to. The Seabees came and helped clean up all the yards. The fire took the--what's Rossiter [Hall] now--that was our convent--and it jumped over--it was a wind--you know, it was carrying this thing--jumped over, burnt rings around two palm trees that are still there--jumped over the trap hole--and it was down on the other side by the time we evacuated at noon. We sent the girls out at nine o'clock. We evacuated at noon. It had jumped over to the other side of the library. It took the library and it took a part of this house [Carondelet Center]--the north end. The Sisters--I guess they've told you this funny story about--the novices were very obedient. They--you know, you told them to do this they do it. The Sister said, "Take your laundry bag"--meaning put stuff in it. They took their empty laundry bag with them--went down--anyhow. We were down there--the Treasurer had enough sense--had mind to buy toothbrushes and toothpaste for us and all that. We came back and I slept at what was Mary Cottage, behind--little cottage behind Rossiter that burnt--this didn't burn. It was a little wooden building, and it didn't burn. But it--we had no electricity. I slept there that night and the Sister that lived there divided her soap dish and gave me half the soap. And we--you know, it's--we didn't have any--took showers without--with cold water--and the ashes blowing around. Anyhow we moved--another Sister and I moved down here--moved here--lived here until Spring when there was more room at the Mount. We moved to the Mount--Carondelet Hall and then to Brady [Hall]. And eventually our-- Rossiter [Hall] was built--extended--a new wing, and Humanities [Bldg] was built that year and we moved back to our convent. Things that happened at the Mount--that I really want to tell you--there's interesting things while I was Registrar.

[00:48:47.16] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: President Kennedy died while we--during that time that I was there. That was--the students and faculty--everybody was--they just couldn't believe it. They were gathered around the cars to listen to the radios and we had eleven o'clock Mass in the chapel--was standing room only--they went to the Mass--which you really didn't--it was quite a day. Something else I was going to tell you--.

[00:49:14.22] INTERVIEWER: Close to the time of Vatican II and--

[00:49:16.25] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: Vatican II came along. We--change our clothes, little by little. Some went faster than others. I was one of them that were conservatives. You can tell--I'm still wearing a veil--one of the very few that does--just because--I don't know why. But anyhow--

[00:49:34.02] INTERVIEWER: How did you feel about the--overall--habit or beyond that? There were a lot of changes that came to religious life--

[00:49:41.16] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: It was hard--but it was easy being at the Mount. And then my next mission was here [Carondelet Center]. There was something else I was going to tell you about the Mount when I was Registrar. Oh, we used to have--no that--[unintelligible] next. My last year at the Mount--it was hard. I'll tell you more about that when I--. I was--oh the Provincial came to see me my last year and she said, "We'd like to appoint you to be the next Treasurer." The Treasurer they'd had for many, many years--about thirty years--had cancer--terminal cancer. I'd gone to help once--to help--and so I guess they thought I knew what to do with the office. And she said, "We'd like you to be the next Treasurer." Anyhow, they appointed me--as I think--what was it called--Chairman of--some committee. I was still Registrar, but I

went to meetings of the Treasurers and meetings that pertained to a Treasurer's work for the province. So I went there in Fall, and I was made Provincial Treasurer. As Provincial Treasurer, I consulted with--I did things that I never would have done as a lay person. You asked that same question. In religious life, you just did things. You were told to and you did it. I was put on boards. I did not have board--you know, I would not be qualified for Board Member. I was put on two hospital boards--St. Mary's in Tucson--I travelled monthly there--Daniel Freeman Hospital. I was a Trustee at the Mount for ten years. I was put on Carondelet High School. You just did it. [laughs]. I don't think I qualified as well as I did, but I was there. And I got to--we had--on graduation time, you know, we'd march from the library to the Circle and once we had [U.S.] President [Ronald] Reagan [(1911-2004)] came to speak--as a speaker. And we met in the library--we got to shake hands with him. He was Governor [of California] at the time. And so that was one highlight there I guess, if you liked President Reagan. I liked him--he was nice--nice guy. What else happened there? Okay, during our time here Sister Pat [Sister Mary Allen Rosholt?]-you have to meet her--she has--I hope she--she has been on the Mount Trustees since 1980--since I left there and she became Treasurer until now--she's still there--the longest lasting Trustee. She could tell you many stories. She helped me a lot--we travelled together. We--during our time we had--we--the novices moved out of the north wing which--where they were--they went to a convent. And we hired contractors and--we went through a lot of decision about where we should build the retirement home. We decided--it ended up--that the north--we didn't want to start having another place, although we considered it. It was going to be too expensive having it--all the same services--at two places. Anyhow, the architect studied the thing and gave us a study and it looked like it would work out. We would have that--it was completely razed to the--everything was taken out--there were dormitories, there were--and they build rooms--nice rooms--you've seen them--over in that area--north wing--for retirement. Sister Pat Rosholt and I went through the province to all the places and spoke to the Sisters about what was happening, and we gave them a financial report, which they'd never had before. They never heard finances in the provinces. We thought, well, let's tell them finances. We talked about retirement fund, and building--needing to reach--build a retirement fund--we were just starting it. While I was Treasurer we started this--going on Social Security. The federal government allowed religious to join Social Security--it's a long story. The Sisters do not have salaries. I mean, they get salaries, but they don't keep them. Every salary from the President of the College to administrators of hospitals--their salaries go to the Province. They don't--they get budget--they get--well in those--in the early days, when you were in a habit, you asked for what you needed. You didn't need much--you just asked for it. Now, it's different--now we have budgets and we have to present budgets, and within certain budget limits you get money every month for your needs and so forth. But your salaries go to the convent. So the--okay--the Sisters then started working in different places--different things. Vatican II was hard on me. I found it hard. But again I was in a place where it was easy--not hard for me. I think if I'd been in a small convent maybe it would have been harder--I don't know. There are enough--I had enough--you know--I felt comfortable. I didn't feel isolated in any way.

[00:55:22.11] INTERVIEWER: What were some of the challenges for you about Vatican II?

[00:55:25.08] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: I don't think they were challenges. I kind of went with it--like Sisters started moving to other places--near their [services?]-and I--and they wanted to take jobs so they could pay for rent and I said, "We're Sisters. We have a vow of poverty. You cannot do that." So I met--we met with the Provincial and I said, "If we allow them to do that we have to pay for the rent. It's up to us." And we have--they have to present their--you know, what they're doing, what they--where they're going to rent and so forth. Eventually we acquired some houses--some people gave us--some Sisters--some families had died and they'd give us houses. Everything that we have is gift. There's--and the Sisters are the prime givers. All their salaries have gone to the community. But we have had a lot of generous donors. So we keep going. Is there anything else I want to tell you about--during that time?

[00:56:28.15] INTERVIEWER: Anything about the liturgy, or just even [unintelligible]--

[00:56:32.16] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: The liturgy changed. That was hard--liturgy. But we kept going. Our liturgy kept going here. We had our daily Mass--we still do. A couple of us still lead prayers--the early morning prayers. You know we say the--religious say the Little--what we call the "Little Office". Priests say the total office of the Church--it's the prime--the different hours of the day. We used to say it in Latin when I entered. In the 1960s we changed to English. Of course the liturgy changed to English also, and we started answering the Mass in English and so forth. That didn't bother me--I mean, that was okay. I've

always kind of been bothered by Sisters preaching a sermon--at least which they do now--now and then. You just listen--you know, you just accept it--it's part of life now. Some of them are better than the priests--you have to admit that. [laughs]. They have more education--their education is good. But I still like--. There's just something in me that I--there's people--some of them that talk about being priests. Well that--I don't like the idea, but you know. I hope I'll be dead and gone by the time that happens--[laughs]--if it does. One Sister left the community--became an Episcopalian--and she became an Episcopalian minister. [laughs]. I think she's still there--I think she is. Anyhow. Okay. From--you want me to go on to my next ministry or?

[00:58:10.18] INTERVIEWER: Can I just ask you a little bit then also about Vatican II in terms of the congregation and the--were you involved at all or did you get interested in the roots of the community--the sort of going back and learning more about the CSJ's and the foundations?

[00:58:25.19] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: [laughs]. Yeah. When I got that on your letter about the "charism" I thought, I didn't even know what charism was when I entered. It's an "in" word--kind of an in word these days. We were missioned--you know, we were missioned and we did our work and we didn't think much about--. I think the people who went to chapters and had to do the putting together the wording --you know, had the ability to do it--worded it. [laughs]. I went--you know, after this I went to the archives and looked at one of the early rules and--that we--we are here to serve--for "love of God and love of neighbor"--and principally through education and health care, at that time. Then the later documents were--of course started to expand to--let's see--currently--what do they call it? I was going to write it down. What is that wording in our last--?

[00:59:25.20] INTERVIEWER: "Responding to the needs of the times"? Or--

[00:59:27.26] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: No there's a wording I had written down somewhere but I think I forgot it somewhere.

[00:59:31.24] INTERVIEWER: The "unifying love"?

[00:59:34.18] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: "Unifying love". Okay, that's--when I went to--the first thing I went to were our latest document that said "unifying love", and I think it was just all encompassing. They try to encompass earth and everything else now, but it's still "love of God, love of neighbor" I'm sure. There was something I was going to say there and I forgot.

[00:59:58.29] INTERVIEWER: It's okay.

[01:00:02.13] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: It's escaped my mind. Yeah.

[01:00:05.14] INTERVIEWER: I was just if that--you know, impacted or you know, deepened your sense of your mission or changed your spirituality, your spiritual practices?

[01:00:15.05] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: I don't think it did. Maybe it did. Some would say it did. Am I getting too late--am I going too long?

[01:00:23.05] INTERVIEWER: You're okay. I'll ask you a few more questions and then--let's see.

[01:00:27.08] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: I could tell you something--.

[01:00:29.00] INTERVIEWER: Something else from the Mount. You were also at the Doheny campus, right?

[01:00:32.28] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: No I was never at Doheny--

[01:00:34.07] INTERVIEWER: Just only at Chalon.

[01:00:35.00] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: When I was at Chalon--I went back there in the Business Office--and during that time I met students, faculty, administrators that I still communicate with--I'm in touch with. And Pat Dull [Patrick Dull, MSMU Assistant Controller] still works in Accounting--who was there. I

hired a Sister from the Philippines--I mean a lady from the Philippines--they met, they married and they have two children and they come and visit all the time--their kids are now in college--one is in college, and so forth. It was fun. During that time we also had the Olympics [1984 Summer Olympic Games, XXIII Olympiad] which are coming again. And that was an interesting time. We had Sisters that worked for the Olympics. They had to work very hard, because we had the--here at the Mount we had the--many of the managers--the directors and all that--and they connected--one of the--I think it was the phone company--connected us with Doheny and they built our Doheny residence hall for us. They connected our phone system and they left it. Of course they put in--air conditioners and everything--they left it when they left. They--all the communication to the world went through our two campuses. And I know that we were trying to turn the electricity off to put in an air conditioning in the place and they told us to wait until the Monday after the Olympics ended, because they were still communicating to the world through the campuses. I don't know--I wonder if they'll do that next time--the next Olympics. I probably won't--I'll watch from heaven. Yeah, that's one interesting--. You want to wind it up?

[01:02:18.07] INTERVIEWER: We can wind down just a little bit. [Director's comments]. So you mentioned leadership--you had opportunities for leadership--

[01:02:33.06] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: Yes I did--

[01:02:33.27] INTERVIEWER: --as a Sister that you might not have had--

[01:02:28.18] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: --things I would never have done before--never.

[01:02:36.29] INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Can you--is there anything you can highlight in terms of--was there a specific learning or skill? And I'm asking this because we talk to our students a lot about women and leadership and to be courageous and step up in many of the ways that Sisters have done.

[01:02:54.09] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: Well I had the--some of the education before, but I think if--as a lay person--my personality is--I might have gotten to a supervisor or a department maybe but that's as far as I can imagine--picture myself going. You just learned by doing, I think--a lot of it by doing. I know I had to consult attorneys and business people when I was helping the Provincial as a Treasurer. I was on the phone quite often too. We had hospital--we had--at the time we sponsored hospitals, five of them--later on they went on their--into another sponsorship--but like ours are going to go now--our academies and college. And they--we met monthly. I had to have a log for them explaining--gathering information about what they needed. They were coming with things they wanted. Everything that came in came into me and I had to get information gathered--background information--for them. You know--things--I guess it was kind of an education in itself just doing it year after year. Now the Sister who followed me--Sister Patricia Rosholt--went to Notre Dame--while she was helping she was going in summer to Notre Dame college--University--and got her masters. Now I didn't have my masters. I did have courses after college--but I think that helped. I think--she went farther, I think, because she--and more knowledgeable. She didn't have to probably consult attorneys as much as I did or other advisors as much as I did because I felt I needed it. But--

[01:04:29.25] INTERVIEWER: Do you have any advice you would offer our young women students as they think about their future in leadership?

[01:04:36.05] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: In just leadership or in the community--in leadership?  
[laughs].

[01:04:41.00] INTERVIEWER: Whatever--both--absolutely.

[01:04:42.29] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: Well they have an opportunity that we never had that--they have a leadership program there. We didn't have that. That would probably have helped. I probably wouldn't have joined it--I wouldn't have thought myself a leader. But I mean, they have it made I think already. And I don't think you have to tell them. I think young people have much more nerve than we did. I mean the way they get up and sing, the way they get up and do things that we--you know, some of us wouldn't think of doing in our youth. We were taught to--you know, more background or you know--be careful--cautious--more cautious. And so I think that--I don't--I think that they could teach us. I don't think I could teach them

anything. In religion I'd say yes. In religion you have many opportunities that, you know--you wouldn't--education, work. And now it's different. You don't--a Sister finds the work and they--they get assisted in--if they're going to start a work we have a ministerial services corporation that, you know, gives them help and they can--you know, are covered by insurance for a while until they get going. So they have all kinds of help in religion. I don't think they--they have other opportunities these days in their--I read the magazine and the things that they do in summer time and so forth--what do they call it where they go--internships. We didn't do that in our day--I don't recall--I don't think so. But we had very good teachers and we had--social welfare was a--like the Nursing now I guess--prominent. When--my roommate was in Social Welfare and when she graduated she--she had taken all the courses for the masters. She didn't take--she took a course--it was just repeating what she had had. They ended the Social Welfare because of that.

[01:06:48.12] INTERVIEWER: What are you most proud of--of being--of your congregation?

[01:06:54.21] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: Well, of how daring people can be. When I think of Mother Margaret [Rev. Mother Margaret Mary Brady (1866-1954)]--the bishop--I guess you've heard this story before--the bishop asking her to start a college so she--off she goes to--mortgages a property and buys some acreage in Santa Monica Hills--and no roads--I mean, just--and then eventually the college has the program--they put on a program so they could pave the road up to the college. I mean, they were brave people, and still are. I mean like starting programs now we have--I admire the Sisters that do that. The Sisters that go into all of these other special works--they're just about a fourth of them now that are doing that--but--of the working people. Like the latest one in--what's her name--[Sister] Teresa Harpin--that's--works with prisoners, or the ones who have been prisoners ["Get on the Bus" program]. And she was under our ministerial services corporation for a while to get started. And now--while she gathered--I admire the work they do. I couldn't do that. I'm not that--you know, forward, or able to. I'm not that much of a leader. But I admire those that are. The ones that started St. Joseph Center that--we helped them--I was the Treasurer at the time when they started. They were going to start out with--hiring people for a--in a laundromat. And you know--teaching the homeless and so forth. And eventually got them you know, got their permits to raise money so they could start helping the people and--in other ways.

[01:08:42.20] INTERVIEWER: Any last thoughts about what's been most joyful for you about your religious life?

[01:08:47.17] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: Most joyful? Well--we are old--a lot of old people here. We still enjoy our stories. This morning I went to Mass. Before Mass Sister Marie Bernadette came and sat beside me. She whispered, "Good morning." I said, "Good morning." She said, "The Dodgers lost." And I said, "But their magic number is three." We carry on our little humor, you know--and then we prayed, I mean, you know. [laughs]. We communicated what happened to the Dodgers before going on to praying. I mean, we have that sense of humor that we can enjoy things that happen and--funny things that happen sometimes. Sad things happen--we see a lot of our old-timers dying and you know, that's hard. But some of them have a real sense of humor that when they're dying, you know--even then they--so I think that by and large we have a joyful spirit. The Sisters in that side--I'm on this side--I'm still an active Sister, ninety years old--they have a lot of opportunities for a lot of things--for health things, making things, creating things that they thought they never could do and they do it. And a lot of outings. They take those who you know--[makes air quotes]--can't--don't know what's going on--they'll take them out for drives and things. It's very nice.

[01:10:16.29] INTERVIEWER: Is there something that you had prepared or reflected on that you wanted to share that we haven't shared thus far?

[01:10:23.27] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: Let's see. There was something--I forgot what it was. But let's end it.

[01:10:37.23] [Director's comments].

[01:10:48.27] KELBY THWAITES: I'm curious--I have just one question in regards to Vatican II. You had mentioned that that was difficult for you. Could you just briefly let us know what it was about Vatican II that was--that was the hardest for you? Either to change or to embrace or--what was it about Vatican II?

[01:11:07.09] SISTER ANITA JOSEPH ARAGON: Well I was slow to change. I like the habit. [laughs]. It was comfortable. It was so easy, you know. You never had to bother thinking what you were going to wear the next day, you know. You just--it was simple. I liked our community living together--Sisters working together in a school or a hospital. I think we've lost a lot of vocations because they don't see us--they don't know us. Like I knew the Mount Sisters--I knew--and almost every Sister that you ever hear--when you read their--what we call their necrology--when they die--they came to community because they knew the Sisters in a school. They liked them, and they liked what they saw, and they entered because of the Sisters. It was almost ninety percent of them. Now they don't see us and we don't look like the Sisters. I'll tell you one funny little story if you have--do you have time for one funny little story? I--with my little veil--I went--I was flying to New Mexico. And we were at the airport in a little area, you know, where the--waiting room. It was filled with people. And people come--another line was forming in the middle of the room and in comes--in to forming the line comes a couple. One had a baby in arms--the husband had a baby--and the lady had this little jumping guy--was just--couldn't--a five year old jumping up and down. And pretty soon they stopped and they point--I mean, we were all looking--everybody was looking at them--they were so cute. And she pointed to me, and so I waved to them. I thought well, that's--. Pretty soon they ran over to me, and they stood in front of me. And the lady said, "Bless Sister". And he put his little hand over my head. It was so cute. So I blessed him. And I was--before I could ask him his name they were gone back in the line. I thought, you know--I was kind of embarrassed to look around because I thought I was--we're the scene of the--you know. But they see a veil and they'll--frequently they'll talk to you. I--Sisters will say we're not here because of that. In fact they're glad to be--travel without being recognized. I don't use it for that reason. Might be more comfortable not using it. But I don't know--I don't travel any more anyhow. So. And I think I just do it just to be stubborn. [laughs].

[01:13:19.18] [Director's comments].

[01:13:35.10] End of interview.

## Interview Index

Interview Date: 09/19/2017

Interviewee: Sister Anita Joseph Aragon

Interviewer: Shannon Green, Director, CSJ Institute, Mount Saint Mary's University; Sean Gary, Kelby Thwaits, Instructor, Film and Television, Mount Saint Mary's University; Mary Trunk, Instructor, Film and Television, Mount Saint Mary's University; Laura Townsend, Production Coordinator, CSJ Institute.

Location: Carondelet Center, Los Angeles, California.

Transcription Date: 09/27/2017

Transcribed By: Nancy Steinmann

[00:00:00.00] [Director's comments]

[00:00:23.29] Date, location participants.

[00:00:47.25] Full name and age: Sister Anita Joseph Aragon, 90 years old. Baptismal name: Dylia Aragon (pronounced "Dill-ee-ah").

[00:01:17.24] Early life and family. Born Belen, New Mexico. Mother Anna Maria Baca. Father Ignacio Aragon y Barreras. Eight children. Mother's education, teacher training. Father's education, railroad work.

[00:04:44.17] Early education and religious life. Attending St. Mary's School. Baptism, confirmation and first communion. Change of participation in liturgy using Latin missals. Shirley Temple Black (1928-2014, American child actress).

[00:07:34.16] Bilingual household. Moving to Barstow, California age 11. First meeting with Mexican people. Attending public school. School events. Calico Days events. Singing in county choral group in Long Beach. Long Beach Pike.

[00:13:20.11] Attending Barstow High school, San Luis Rey Academy [boarding school] two years during World War II. Serving tea with Marines in public events. San Luis Rey retreat, San Diego Bishop Charles Francis Buddy (1887-1966).

[00:15:40.22] Attending the Mount--Business Economics major, Spanish minor. Freshman year. Building of Charles Willard Coe Memorial Library. Moving books from previous library in Brady Hall to Coe Library. Sports--tennis, archery, fencing, hiking. Junior year--snow at Chalon Campus. Clubs and leadership experience.

[00:19:04.23] Early vocation. Getting to know CSJ faculty. Trip to UCLA to view first computer. Graduation in Bowl at Chalon. Decision to enter CSJs. Parents reaction to vocation.

[00:20:55.23] Memories of Sisters at Mount. Sister Alice Marie Cheap (1906-1984), Academic Dean. Sister Aline Marie Gerber (1917-2009), Spanish faculty. Sister St. Francis Sheerin (-1961), History and Economics faculty. Sister Mary Hortensia Lynch (-1969). Sister Agnes Marie O'Loughlin (1903-2006), MSMC President. Issue of student smoking room at Mount.

[00:22:25.18] Novitiate life. Retreats. Students wearing caps and gowns for talks in chapel. Sisters who influenced her: Sister St. Francis. Admiration for Sisters. Rule of silence. Recreation days. Wearing the habit. Entered 1950, reception 1951.

[00:25:15.27] Novitiate life. Teaching Spanish to novitiate group. Differences because of already having BA. Practical jokes. Sister Kathleen Mary McCarthy. Sister Teresa Ann [??] in Hawaii.

[00:27:16.08] Taking vows 1953. Early missions. Mission to St. Eugene school, Los Angeles teaching sixth grade. Attending Loyola University. Teaching second and third grade and preparing children for first communion. Attending UCLA (business). Teaching sixth and seventh grade. Learning from teaching grade school. Value of community experiences.

[00:31:50.10] Attending USC (business courses). Vocation in Business and Economics. Attending USC with Sister Marie Bernadette Walsh (Director of Accounting and Business Office Manager) and Sister Regina Clare Salazar; living at Stimson House (Infant of Prague). Mission to Daniel Freeman as Business Office Manager. Rev. Mother Mary Killian Corbett (-1965).

[00:36:05.03] Mission at Daniel Freeman. Los Angeles Lakers, Los Angeles Dodgers and sports medicine. Trip to Balboa Beach with nurses and Sister Josefa Therese Lee--story of issue over newspaper pictures of Sisters fishing. Sister Eleanor [Francis Powers?]. Mother Killian.

[00:41:43.01] "Spirit" of working at Daniel Freeman. Sister Julia Mary [Farley]. Sisters living in stock room and morgue at hospital. Grace Howland [(1870-1956), born Grace Elizabeth Freeman, daughter of Daniel Freeman] and Howland House. Sister Marie Bernadette Walsh.

[00:44:34.04] Working at Mount as Registrar. Sister Alice Marie Cheap (1906-1984), Academic Dean. Sister Mary Rebecca Doan (1910-1999), Nursing department chair and MSMC President.

[00:45:47.23] Bel Air Fire 1961. Seabees helping with campus cleanup. Story of students taking laundry when evacuating fire. Building at the Mount.

[00:48:40.11] Death of President John F. Kennedy (1917-1963). Vatican II. Change of habit.

[00:50:13.06] Appointment as Provincial Treasurer. Acting as Board Member for Tucson and Daniel Freeman Hospitals, Trustee as Mount, and Carondelet High School. Visit of Governor (later U.S. President) Ronald Reagan (1911-2004).

[00:52:23.19] Working as Provincial Treasurer. Sister Patricia "Pat" [Sister Mary Allen] [Rocholt?] Trustee and Treasurer. Novices moving to convent. Building CSJ retirement home. Sisters' salaries and budgets.

[00:54:57.19] Changes to missions. Vatican II. Issues with Sisters earning salaries for work and paying rent. Changes to liturgy. The "Little Office" liturgy. Sisters preaching sermons and being priests. Sister leaving community to become Episcopalian minister.

[00:58:09.11] Vatican II. Going back to roots of CSJs. Charism. "Unifying love".

[01:00:30.02] Working at Chalon in Business Office. Patrick Dull, MSMU Assistant Controller. 1984 Summer Olympic Games (XXIII Olympiad). Installation of new Doheny phone system for Olympics.

[01:02:20.14] Leadership ideas for current students. Opportunities for leadership as a CSJ. Sister Patricia Rosholt.

[01:06:48.25] Pride in being a CSJ. Rev. Mother Margaret Mary Brady (1866-1954), founding of MSMU. Sister Theresa Harpin, "Get on the Bus" program. Founding of St. Joseph's Center for homeless.

[01:08:43.06] Greatest joys of religious life. Sister Marie Bernadette Walsh. Humor among Sisters. Sisters passing. Life in retirement.

[01:10:17.18] Other reflections. Difficulties of Vatican II. Changing the habit. Influence of community living on vocations. Story about blessing children; wearing veil for recognition.

[01:13:35.07] End of interview.